

SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM OVERVIEW AND TIPS

When promoting your National Prevention Week (NPW) events and activities, it is vital to maximize your efforts by regularly engaging with your intended audience. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and other digital media platforms, as well as email marketing, can help you reach a larger audience quickly at minimal or no cost. If your group or organization has social media accounts, then it is likely that you are already using them to promote your work.

When considering which digital platforms and social networks to use, there are three key things to consider:

1. **Target Audience**—Who is your target audience(s)? Where are they most represented online and on social media? Where do they get their information?
2. **Objectives and Purpose**—What is the purpose of your online activities? How will your social media messages and content support your larger social marketing/communications strategy? What is the action that you want your engaged audiences to take?
3. **Process and Resources**—What resources do you have to devote to your social and digital media strategy? Consider potential writers, graphic designers, social media publishers, and community managers. Who needs to review and approve copy? Do you have someone who can respond quickly to time-sensitive posts on your social media accounts? Take a look at your marketing budget to see if you can invest in social media advertisements. A little bit can go a long way! How will you evaluate your efforts?

Here are some ways to get started with planning promotional activities on social media:

- Invest the time in developing strong promotional content (e.g., brief messages, graphics, or videos).
- Manage a social media editorial content calendar to maintain active and engaged accounts.
- Respond to and engage with comments accordingly.
- Ask staff members or volunteers who have personal accounts to help promote the activities and events through their personal profiles.

The following is a list of commonly used social media networks and digital outreach channels, their best-use scenarios, and complementary app suggestions based on general trends and insights.

Hashtags

Using hashtags (#) on any social media network can connect posts for your target audience while also connecting them to an even larger audience having conversations around the same hashtag and topic. Using a hashtag can bring more eyes to your post, and potentially more attendees to your event.

Prior to beginning social media promotion, create a hashtag specific to your NPW event. Use your event name, a key phrase, or your theme for the year, and consistently include the hashtag at the end of your posts about the event. You can also include the NPW hashtag (#NPW2020) to share information about your event, which will bring your event into the national conversation about NPW.

Facebook

Facebook remains one of the most widely used social media sites among adults in the U.S., with about seven in 10 adults using the platform. Users range in age; however, more than two-thirds of people age 50 and older use the platform.ⁱ If your organization has a Facebook Business page, you can share organizational information and events with followers. Facebook is best used for news and announcements, event highlights, photos or albums, online conversations among communities and directly with organizations, online event groups, links to relevant articles or blog posts, and videos.

Create a Facebook event page for your event and send invitations to your network as well as to your current and potential partners. Once an event page is created, you can update the details on a regular basis and people can share the event with others to spread the word to their own networks. You should also share the event page directly on your organization's Business page.

The Facebook Live feature allows you to broadcast video in real time so your followers can watch and/or interact with you. It is great for special events and announcements, behind-the-scenes looks, and personalized video updates. Another great way to leverage the Facebook Live feature is to hold a live Q&A and have viewers submit questions directly within the live feed. You can then answer questions in real time. Live videos can be archived for additional views after the event. For more information, go to www.live.fb.com/about.

Lastly, the Facebook Stories feature allows you to use a slideshow format to post photos and videos, which will disappear after 24 hours.

Pro Tip: Use Facebook's own built-in scheduler to schedule posts ahead of time. Use its built-in Insights feature to explore analytics information for your posts.

NPW Tip: Create a Facebook event page for your event and send invitations to your network as well as to your current and potential partners. Also, share the link on your event page on other social media platforms and with your partners to share on their social media channels.

Instagram

The third most-used social media platform in the U.S., used by 37 percent of adult internet users, Instagram skews significantly toward younger adults (ages 18 to 29). Women tend to use Instagram more than men.

Instagram is a visually oriented, highly engaged social media platform where you can upload, caption, and tag images and short videos using hashtags to help promote your organization and your NPW plans.

Similar to Facebook Stories, Instagram Stories allow you to post photos and videos in a slideshow format that disappears after 24 hours. You can add graphics, text, music, GIFs, geotags, and hashtags to all images and videos to enhance them for your audience. Instagram Stories are meant to be casual. Use the successive video feature to tell full-length stories and show events or ideas as they unfold. This is a great place to tease the planning of your event and show behind-the-scenes shots during the event.

If you want your story content to last longer than 24 hours, consider creating a Highlight. Highlights let you spotlight sets of Instagram Stories on your profile page. When users tap a specific Highlight icon, they are able to see each story within that Highlight. A major benefit of Highlights is that they last forever, not just 24 hours. So, if you have important information—like phone numbers for crisis lines—this information can be readily available to your followers at all times. You may even want to have a Highlight dedicated to your NPW work.

Pro Tip: When on mobile, you can easily discover popular hashtags to consider putting in your post. Start writing a hashtag with the “#” sign, and a drop-down menu with possible hashtags and their number of occurrences will appear. On Instagram, the rules of hashtags are simple: The more hashtags you use, the more likes you’re going to get. The downside is your posts might look a bit spam-like to your most engaged followers, so be sure to balance which hashtags you use. Best practice allows for up to 10 hashtags within a post.

NPW Tip: Be sure to create a “save the date” graphic that you can share in both your Stories and on your profile. Consider creating a Highlight to house all the information that you share in Stories leading up to your event. That way your followers can access all your event information in one place.

Twitter

Twitter is used by 22 percent of all U.S. adult internet users. Internet users in urban areas are much more likely to use Twitter than users in suburban or rural areas. Unlike Facebook and Instagram, more men than women use Twitter.

This platform allows for easy updates and information-sharing in 280 characters or less. Posts on Twitter are called “tweets.” Because you can only include a limited number of characters in each tweet, focus on a call to action and positive message, related statistics, or the most important information about your NPW activities and events. Note that photos and videos no longer count toward character limits, which allows you to share more promotional content. Post information and frequent updates about your event, and link to your organization’s or group’s website to provide followers with more information. Remember to include your promotional hashtag at the end of your tweets about your NPW event and be sure to include the hashtag #NPW2020.

Also, do not forget to follow local leaders and community influencers to thoughtfully bring them into the conversation.

Pro Tip: The best Twitter profiles don’t just share links; they begin conversations, interact with users, and have a personal tone behind the account. Find a relevant hashtag that has gained some traction so you can be part of the larger conversation as well as gain some new followers.

NPW Tip: Pin information related to your NPW event to the top of your profile. This way it is the first thing that visitors see when they view your profile.

Snapchat

Snapchat has the youngest users out of all the social media platforms on this list. It is a mobile-first, on-the-go social media community and boasts strong daily engagement among young adults (ages 18 to 24). Snapchat is the only platform used equally by men and women.

Snapchat is best used for one-way conversations. Though you can snap with other users, for brands and organizations, it's best to keep your communication limited to your one-way story. This is a great way to show behind-the-scenes views of your event or meeting, as well as incorporate storytelling. All of your Snapchat friends will be able to see snaps you post to your "story." Stories have a lifespan of 24 hours, and there are no limits on how many times they can be viewed in that period, but the best time to post is whenever the content you're recording is happening!

Snapchat Memories now allow you to save stories in the cloud or your phone and to share photos and videos taken any time in the past if they have been saved on your phone.

Snapchat allows users to add captions, drawings, and filters to their photos and videos to your snaps. Have fun and play around with the various filters and speeds that Snapchat provides to appeal to different audiences. Unlike other social media, using a designated hashtag for your event in your caption is not as vital on this platform.

Pro Tip: The best Snapchat Stories let us peer into a part of someone's life or an organization's process that isn't normally showcased, all while telling a good story. Using geotags for a live event can help increase visibility.

NPW Tip: Download one of the pre-designed [NPW Snapchat Geofilters](#) and set-up a [geofence](#) in your community or around the specific location of your event, depending on your budget.

YouTube

YouTube is the world's second-largest internet search engine. Nearly three-fourths of U.S. adults use YouTube, especially users ages 18 to 29. Nearly one-third of U.S. teens ages 13 to 17 say they use YouTube most often.

YouTube can be used in creative ways to share information about your group or organization, your work in the community, or your upcoming NPW plans. You can create a single video or an entire YouTube channel and include promotional videos, testimonials about your group or organization, or highlights of your event footage (in the preparation stages or post-event). Whether your video is promotional, informative, or educational, it should include information about your upcoming event and encourage others to take action to prevent substance misuse and promote mental health.

YouTube videos can be shared on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram via the direct link to the video on YouTube.

Pro Tip: Include relevant tags and links in your YouTube description as a way to pull in audiences who are interested in learning more. There is no limit to the number of tags you can use! Be sure to add concise descriptions to your videos so viewers will know quickly whether or not the video content is indeed what they are looking for. The descriptions also contribute to discoverability in both YouTube and Google searches. (Remember, Google owns YouTube!)

NPW Tip: Be sure to include NPW 2020, #PreventionHappensHere, and SAMHSA in your tags of your NPW videos so your videos appear in all searches related to NPW 2020.

Timing Your Posts

For events, begin posting about your NPW plans on social media platforms as soon as you confirm a date and location; the most effective way to do this is with a “save the date” graphic. As planning progresses, post more details to generate buzz about your event, including creating a Facebook event. In the two months leading up to your event, post about your event on a weekly basis, and in the final week, post daily reminders. Consider asking partner organizations and sponsors to post reminders on their social media profiles as well during the final week before your event.

During NPW 2020, each day will have a designated prevention theme (see schedule below). When applicable, consider using the themes to help develop your events and activities as well as your social media posts.

- Monday, May 11: Preventing Prescription Drug and Opioid Misuse
- Tuesday, May 12: Preventing Underage Drinking and Alcohol Misuse
- Wednesday, May 13: Preventing Illicit Drug Use and Youth Marijuana Use
- Thursday, May 14: Preventing Youth Tobacco Use (E-cigarettes and Vaping)
- Friday, May 15: Preventing Suicide

ⁱ Audience data sourced from the Pew Research Center. You can find more demographic data for Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and other social networks at Pew’s website: <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/04/10/share-of-us-adults-using-social-media-including-facebook-is-mostly-unchanged-since-2018/> and, <https://www.pewinternet.org/2018/05/31/teens-social-media-technology-2018/>.